



**METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION**

Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter
101 Eighth Street
Oakland, CA 94607-4700
TEL 510.817.5700
TTY/TDD 510.817.5769
FAX 510.817.5848
E-MAIL info@mtc.ca.gov
WEB www.mtc.ca.gov

**MTC Advisory Council
April 9, 2008
Minutes**

Bob Planthold called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. In attendance were members Wendy Alfsen, Steve Belkin, John Cockle, Paul Cohen, Angela Colombo, Raphael Durr, Karla Goodbody, David Grant, William Hastings, Richard Hedges, John Inks, Cathy Jackson, Sherman Lewis, Xiao-Yun Lu, Margaret Okuzumi and Don Rothblatt.

Minutes

The minutes were approved unanimously with Wendy Alfsen abstaining.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Report from the Minority Citizens Advisory Committee (MCAC); Report from the Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee (EDAC)

No report.

Staff Report

Ms. Therese Knudsen announced that Ray Razzavi has resigned from his Advisory Council appointment, and MTC will be working with Commissioners to fill the vacant engineering seat.

She noted that while staff had added two joint advisors meetings to discuss T2035 project trade-offs and the draft plan, the May meeting has been canceled. Staff will be conducting outreach meetings in each county that will cover the same material that would have been covered in the May joint advisors meeting. Advisors are encouraged to participate by attending meetings in their respective counties. The next joint advisors meeting will be held June 5 at 12:30pm in MTC's auditorium.

Lastly, she stated that staff is currently seeking nominations for their 2008 awards program. Nominations are due by Friday, May 9, 2008.

Interstate 80 Corridor Study

Mr. James Corless reported that MTC, ABAG, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), the Solano Transportation Authority and Caltrans have been working on an interregional planning project to analyze ways to improve cooperation and coordination along the corridor within the two regions. The study focused on three elements: 1) Interregional

transportation and land use models; 2) Interregional transportation and land use planning; and, 3) Interregional transportation investments.

He stated that the study has been guided by an interregional steering committee comprised of staff from the regional agencies, Caltrans, the air districts, and local governments along the corridor, along with representatives from a variety of stakeholder interests. Mr. Corless summarized the study findings and recommendations.

Committee comments include:

- Did you look at through traffic and local traffic on the corridor? Response – yes, the study had to sort out long vs. short distance trips
- 511 doesn't cover both regions
- With trains, it's not just speed but also reliability – separate freight and passenger lines
- Need last mile service from train stations – it will help ridership
- Consensus in the rail community - it's not worth upgrading the Capital Corridor. Would rather see money invested in the Altamont Corridor and high-speed rail between the Bay Area and Sacramento.
- Towns have allowed I-80 to be their commercial artery without building their own arterial network. Response: Growth will start to slow partly because of city centered growth policy in both Solano and Yolo counties. Staff is also trying to make investments in the arterial network to start connecting those cities together so people do not have to get onto the freeway.
- Another option is short sea shipping – Port of Sacramento to Oakland
- Traffic behavior is sporadic – we haven't used traffic control measures (ramp metering, speed regulation) effectively or efficiently to improve congestion. Cannot only use planning – need planning and operations
- No link with TCIF funding – would like to get priorities from summit. Elected leaders need to take recommendations to the next level to establish priorities.
- Include Stockton – they are missing

511 Transit Website Revision and Trip Planner Replacement

Mr. Tom Spiekerman presented a demonstration of the 511 Transit Website and TakeTransit Trip Planner. He stated that since 1997, MTC has contracted with bd Systems, Inc. to operate and maintain the 511 Transit project. MTC issued a Request for Proposals in March 2006 for a contractor to operate, maintain, and further develop the project beyond that existing contract's expiration. bd Systems was selected as the program contractor, and began the new contract on October 1, 2006.

Mr. Spiekerman provided an update on the outcome of the evaluation for the Transit Trip Planner Replacement, and subsequent development work on the new trip planner and 511 Transit website.

He stated that concurrent with the new trip planner incorporation, MTC and its contractor have been undertaking a redesign and redevelopment of the 511 Transit website. This development is intended to improve the website's functionality and ease of use. The launch of the website is planned for mid-May 2008 as a Beta site. The existing 511 Transit website will remain as the primary MTC public website for transit information, and the new website will be offered as a Beta version to be tested and reviewed by the public before its official launch in July.

Committee comments include:

- Will you be able use cost as a parameter when selecting a trip? Response – yes, it will eventually be added as an option
- What about translation? Response – It will be translated in Spanish and Chinese. Regarding translation – suggest using first language speakers to capture language nuances vs. literal word for word translation.
- What about adaptation for PDAs and cell phones? Response – development will be starting in July.

Land Use Subcommittee – Subcommittee Report

Mr. Eli Naor was absent from the committee meeting; therefore no report was given on the subcommittee. However, Mr. Doug Johnson reported on the TLC Program Evaluation and Recommendations that will be presented to the Planning Committee on April 11, 2008.

Mr. Johnson highlighted the key findings within the TLC Planning Program, the Housing Incentive Program (HIP), and the TLC Capital Program, and noted that the Commission allocates roughly \$30 million a year that is divided almost equally between those programs.

Given the results of the TLC program evaluation, Mr. Johnson requested committee input on the following recommendations: 1) Tighten the connection between the TLC program and projects that directly support infill housing and transit-oriented development throughout the region by targeting a portion of TLC funds for locally-designated Priority Development Areas under the FOCUS program; 2) Discontinue the TLC Planning Program and focus on larger land use planning grants through the Station Area Planning Program, combined with smaller, quick-response technical assistance grants to assist local jurisdictions with specific TOD-related challenges; 3) Discontinue the Housing Incentive Program while still incorporating incentives to approve new housing by linking TLC awards to the planning and construction of new transit supportive development; 4) Broaden TLC grant eligibility to include other infrastructure improvements including parking garages and local land parcel acquisition in order to maximize future development at key smart growth locations throughout the region, and 5) Provide larger TLC capital grants at more frequent intervals.

Committee comments include:

- Recommend that the existing size of the overall TLC Program be tripled – that it be in the one program
- Would like to see housing development referenced as an incentive
- Do not think parking should be subsidized
- Especially in the suburbs, sometimes parking structures are critical to development of a site. TLC could influence parking development.
- Recommendation #3 should say sunset instead of discontinue
- Broaden TLC grant eligibility only if the eligibility is contingent on mandatory compliance with MTC established guidelines or policies

Mr. Paul Cohen moved acceptance of the five recommendations, with the exception of funding for parking. Ms. Cathy Jackson made a friendly amendment to the motion indicating that annual grants should be tripled with required evaluation at those intervals. The motion passed with 14

members in favor, and three members opposing. Staff will report these comments to the Planning Committee on Friday, April 11.

Transportation Economics and Pricing – Subcommittee Report

Mr. Sherman Lewis stated that the proposal is for MTC to consider hiring an economist. The economist would have three major tasks: 1) develop a method of analyzing transportation economics and pricing reforms, 2) reframe the pricing debate to look more closely at the adverse affects of current mispricing of automobile use and to look more closely at the benefits of pricing reform, and 3) develop a series of studies that would use more sophisticated economic analysis of a variety of pricing reforms that would provide for a more informed choice on the part of the travelers.

Subcommittee member Mr. Paul Cohen commented on the parking issue, and stated that staff should look at funding loans for parking structures. Parking structures should pay for themselves. Grant funding for parking continues to subsidize the automobile, and hides the cost of the use of the automobile. Staff still looks at the cost of funding transit systems and other modes. He noted that the Joint Policy Committee is looking at how to do this as a way of capturing revenue that is not currently captured as opposed to looking at pricing as a means of reflecting what it actually costs to make the choice between walking, biking, driving, or taking transit.

Committee comments included:

- Agree with hiring an economist, as well as financing parking structures through loans vs. grants.
- The approach will be better served if MTC has an economic program vs. an economist (staff person)
- There is no reliable last mile service available.
- External costs may not be under the purview of MTC
- Make sure you are considering all of the different communities in the Bay Area and the different needs that they have. Some areas do not have extensive transit, so they will have different parking needs.
- Look at the parking issue on a city-by-city, county by county basis.
- In general, the committee agrees with the direction of the subcommittee.

Transportation 2035 – Committee report on April 8th Joint Advisors meeting

Mr. Bob Planthold gave a brief summary of the April 8, 2008 Joint Advisors meeting. He stated that staff had taken all of the suggestions and coordinated them into several broad topics. Participants selected three amongst seven different broad categories. The top three were: 1) transit-oriented development, which includes TLC and HIP funding, 2) improving public transit performance, and 3) universal fare structure. The remaining four were: 1) pedestrian safety, 2) a regional accessible taxi program, 3) paratransit boundaries, 4) HOT lane tolls. He noted that MCAC members proposed a recommendation indicating that if HOT lanes are implemented, then staff needs to look at communities of concern with higher car usage and reinvest funds into those communities.

Other Business/Public Comment

Mr. David Grant announced that on April 16, 2008 at 11am, on the northeast corner of VanNess and Market Street in San Francisco, there will be a demonstration and public kick-off of a campaign to encourage people to ride bicycles in the street and walk them on the sidewalk.

Mr. John Cockle announced that on April 18, 2008 at the Oakland Marriot, a group called the Bay Planning Coalition will hold a decision-makers symposium.

Ms. Wendy Alfsen announced that AC Transit is having a special meeting on east bay transit issues in the Emeryville City Council Chambers on April 18, 2008 at 8am. Also, the State Strategic Highway Safety Improvement Plan meets on May 1, 2008 in Orange County, and May 7, 2008 in Sacramento.

There was no other business. The next meeting of the Advisory Council is scheduled for May 9, 2008. The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

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